

A
SERMON

On Occasion of the

DEATH

Of the late REVEREND

Mr. JOHN FOXON,

PREACH'D AT

Girdlers-Hall,

NOVEMBER 10. 1723.

By HENRY FRANCIS.

LONDON:

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NOTICE

TO THE
CONGREGATION

Committed to the Care of the late

REVEREND and WORTHY
Mr. JOHN FOXON.

My dear Friends,



THE following Discourse
comes into the World
purely *at your Request*.
Several of you well
know, how very much
it was *against my Inclination*, to send
it abroad, and how many *Importuni-
ties I withstood*, before I gave my
Consent to its being sent to the Press.

I KNOW you *heard it with Plea-
sure*, which was signified by the ma-

DEDICATION.

~~my undeserv'd Thanks~~ I afterwards receiv'd: But, I was then, and still am, of Opinion, that, that Delight, which you shew'd in hearing it, proceeded rather from the uncommonly great Respect and Affection, you justly bear to the Memory of dear Mr. Foxon, than any thing in the Discourse, that might recommend itself to your Judgments, well inform'd.

SEVERAL can bear me Witness, with how much Reluctance, I thus appear in the World; sensible how little there can be in any ~~Compassures~~ of mine, that may give Satisfaction, to an Age, that knows not how to relish any thing that's unpolite.

BUT, resolv'd to promote, by divine Grace, the Interest of Christ, in the best Manner I am able, I am content to undergoe the same Treatment, which others of my Brethren, every way my Superiours, have undergone.

IF,

DEDICATION.

IF, with all its *Blemishes* and *Imperfections*, it may be Blessed, to the weaning Souls passing to Eternity, from confining their Regards to a short-liv'd and flattering World; to the begetting in us the most serious Apprehensions of the endless State before us; and a raised esteem of Jesus, that holds the Keys of Death, and the unseen World in his own Hand; if it contribute to the prevailing with the Secure, to bethink them of the short Stay they must make here, and how much they are concerned to see that the great Redeemer and his Righteousness be theirs; and if *that Church* in particular, to whom the *Deceased* stood in a pastoral Relation for 17 Years, reap any spiritual Benefit thereby, I have my End; nor shall I repent that it was even *extorted* from me.

I LOOK on your *Case*, with the most sensible *Concern*. Nor can I think of the Removal of my dear
and

DEDICATION.

and worthy Brother, without a particular *Emotion*. When I consider, how well he answered the Character he sustain'd, and how great a Correspondence there was between his *Doctrine* and *Life*; when I think of his *Zeal* for God, his *Concern* for the Honour of Christ, and his *Regard* and *Affection* to Souls, how he laboured more abundantly, how fervently he prayed, how prudent, inoffensive, and useful he was in his *Conversation*, I must think of your Case with Sorrow.

IN his Death you have lost a most indulgent and faithful Pastor; One, that with Pleasure spent his Strength to do your Souls Service; a most faithful Friend, compassionate and kind; One well worthy of *double Honour*. Since I had the Happiness of being first acquainted with him, I saw in him every thing, that could recommend him to me, and that could make *my preaching* with him agreeable.

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agreeable. I beheld in him abundant Sincerity, which is so much the Ornament of a Gospel Minister; the most unshaken Zeal for God; an uncommon Concern for the Honour of Christ; and the tenderest Regard to immortal Souls. You know how holy and meek, how instructing and humble he was. He might justly take up the Words of his great Master, "The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up." You are not Strangers to his compassionate and sympathizing Spirit; how ready he was to mourn, when others mourned; and how skilful he was to drop the Oil of Gladness into distressed Consciences. The Lamp, that God gave him, tho' it consum'd apace, he was resolved by Divine Grace should continue burning, in shewing others the Way to Heaven.

You will not, I hope, forget the Love and Regard he always discovered to immortal Souls, and to Yours in particular: How passionately he bewailed

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bewailed the Declensions of some; and how forward he was to be an Helper of your Joy. How constant he was in dispensing the Oracles of God, and breaking the Bread of Life, you well know: How skilful, in giving to every one their Due, Terror to whom Terror was due, Comfort to whom Comfort was due. A Workman he was, that did not need to be ashamed; and yet, one of the greatest Modesty I was ever acquainted with; very far from a proud, censorious Spirit; strictly tenacious of what appeared to him to be the Truth of Christ, but very charitable to others. In parting with such a Friend and Pastor, so lively and affectionate a Preacher, who can forbear to mourn? There are not many of his Spirit, which still adds to the Loss. Oh, that his Removal may make you thoughtful, serious and holy! Nor are You the only Persons, that have cause to lament his Departure. Many others will

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will join with you herein, particularly the *poor Ministers in the Country*, for whom I never knew one, that was more concerned. May God, with whom is the Residue of the Spirit, make up this sore Breach.

I HOPE I am not without a becoming Sense of *my own Loss* in his Removal. I have seen *Him* conveyed to the cold Habitation, with whom, for several Years, *I conversed with Delight and Advantage*. His Behaviour was always ornamental to the Relation we stood in to each other; and such as shall ever endear his Name and Memory to me.

I SHALL say no more of that valuable Man, now with God, hearing that his Character will be more fully drawn up by another Hand; and because my worthy Brother, that preached the Funeral Sermon, has already said many things in his praise.

BUT, tho' he is *dead*, Jesus our Friend is *alive*. He liveth, that has the

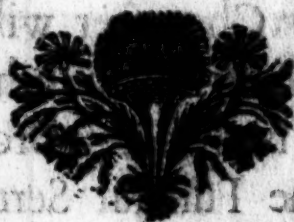
DEDICATION

the Management of the *Church* and *World* in his own Hand, and that is able to provide for all his Churches.

To him you are to look for much of his *Presence* and *Spirit*. His *Direction* you are to *implore*. To his *Care* I commend you, assuring you, that I am

Sincerely yours in the best Bonds,

Henry Francis.



the Assurance of this Grace were gra-

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Flour, and the World, could be-
lieve, and stand, his

H E B. XI. 4.

Towns. With this they saw

— He being dead yet speaketh.

raging flood of the deluge World

by this

W H E N good Men, especi-

ally valuable and faithful

Ministers, are removed out

of our World, though we

see not their *Faces*, they

may in some sense be said still to *speak*.

Thus it is affirmed of *Abel* in my Text,

that being dead he yet *speaketh*. The

Apostle, having given us a most beau-

tiful and just Account of the Nature

of Faith, and the Greatness of its Ef-

ficacy, with respect to those Things we

believe, proceeds in this Chapter to lay

before us a great Variety of Instances,

in whom this Grace prevailed, who, by

B

the

the Assistance of this Grace, were enabled to surmount the most formidable Difficulties and Oppositions. By the lively Exercise of this, they obtained the noblest Conquest over Satan, the Flesh, and the World; could despise all its alluring Charms, and stand, like a Rock, against its most threatening Frowns. With this Eye, they saw through the Emptiness of *present Satisfaction*, and took a distinct and encouraging Prospect of the *delightful World*: By this Means, they were animated in the Discharge of holy Duties; and behaved as Pilgrims, going towards the most glorious Habitation. The sacred Penman chuses to make *Abel* the first Instance of those, in whom this Grace prevailed: This he does most wisely, and for more Reasons than one; as he was the *first*, whose Faith is mentioned with Honour in the Writings of the *Old Testament*; as he was the *first*, that suffered for Religion; the *first*, that resisted unto Blood, striving against Sin; the *first Martyr* for God. Of *Abel*, we are told, in the former Part of this 4th Verse, that *by Faith* he offered a

more

more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, or, a Sacrifice *more full and perfect*, as the original Word, *אֵלֶּיָּהָ*, signifies. *Cain*, indeed, brought an Offering unto God of the Fruits of the Ground, as an Acknowledgment of his Dependence on God, considered as *Creator*, without a becoming Sense of Sin, and its great Demerit, *i. e.* without that Sorrow and Contrition of Soul, with which his Offering should have been attended. *Abel* brings his Offering to God, of the Firstlings of the Flock, and the Fat thereof. It was a *Sacrifice of Atonement*, accompanied with a deep Sense of *Sin* and *Guilt*; and in this the good Man had Respect, by Faith, to that Atonement, which the Redeemer should, in the Fullness of Time, make for Sin. In this Offering of *Abel*, there were both *Death* and *Blood*; by the one, he declared how obnoxious he was to the *Stroke* of *Death* for Sin; and by the other, he acknowledged his Belief, of what God had said concerning the *Seed of the Woman*, by whose *Blood* Believers were to be redeemed. So that it was *Faith*, that made so great a Distinction be-

tween the Offerings of those two Brothers, and that rendered the Oblation of *Abel*, so much more acceptable than that of *Cain*. The Apostle goes on, and says, that by *This* (i. e. his Faith) he obtained Witness that he was righteous, God testifying of, or, bearing a Testimony to, his Gifts. Not that *Abel* was justified, or made righteous, by what he did. No, he *had been* before this a Believer, a Person accepted with God: But, by this his Offering, he evidenced the Sincerity of his Faith; and God declared his being justified, by accepting what he offered.

By what *Way*, or in what *Manner*, the Divine Being gave a Testimony to his Acceptance of *Abel's* Offering, we are not told in the sacred Pages. Probably, (if Conjecture in this Case be allowable) it was by a *visible Sign from Heaven*; so as to convince *Cain*, that, whilst his Offering was rejected, his Brother's was accepted. This seems the more probable, because the Text speaks of *Cain's* being filled with Anger against his Brother. Not only are the Hebrew Doctors of Opinions, that this Token of
 God's

God's accepting *Abel's Offering* was expressed by *Fire from Heaven*, consuming the Sacrifice; but with them agree the *Stream of Christian Fathers and Interpreters*. Vid. Dr. *Whitby* in loc. It was usual, in after-Ages, for God thus to testify his Acceptance of the Sacrifices, that were offered. Thus he gave Testimony to *Abraham's Sacrifice*, Gen. xv. 17. to the Sacrifice of *Aaron*, Lev. ix. 24. of *Gideon*, Judg. vi. 21. of *David*, 1 Chron. xxi. 26. and, to mention no more, to that of *Solomon*, 2 Chron. vii. 1. Thus, you see, that *Abel* was first a *righteous Person*, and then his *Offering* was accepted: Which, by the way, teaches us, that our Persons must first be justified, by Faith in the great Redeemer, before we can reasonably hope that God will be well pleased with, or accept, what we do.

But this is not all that the Apostle speaks concerning *Abel*; he adds, that *being dead, he yet speaketh*. The Verb λαλεῖται, which is rendered *he speaketh*, is of the middle Form, and may therefore be translated either *he speaketh*, or, *he is spoken of*, as you read in the Margin

gin of your Bibles. There are some very learned Men, that take the Word in this latter Sense: And, indeed, most of the *Ancients* understood it in this passive Sense, as Dr. Owen, on the Place, tells us; as if the Divine Spirit intended no more, than that *Abel*, for the Greatness of his Faith, and God's accepting his Offering in so remarkable a Manner, *is spoken of*, i. e. continues to be mentioned with Honour in all Ages of the Church; agreeable to that Portion of Scripture, wherein we are told, that the Righteous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance. But, as both Dr. Owen, and Dr. *Whitby* well observe, this is not the *Intendment* of the inspired Writer. The Apostle speaks of *Abel*, and affirms something of him that is *peculiar* to him; something, wherein others must not be joined with him: Whereas this *of a good Report*, or being mentioned with Respect and Honour, is not so, being common with him to others, such as *Noah*, *Abraham*, and indeed to all the Patriarchs. They were spoken of with Applause, and justly celebrated, in all Generations succeeding

ceeding them, as well as *Abel*. Besides, the Apostle is his own Interpreter, in *Heb.* *xi.* 24. where he directly attributes speaking to the Blood of *Abel*. From which, with other Considerations, that might be mentioned, it appears, that our Translators have well rendered the Word in an active Sense, *he speaketh*. There are several Things assigned by Expositors, which *Abel*, though dead, may yet be conceived to speak; some of which may be these, as they are set down by that, which bears the Name of Mr. Henry's Exposition of this Epistle to the *Hebrews*: As, 1. That Man, though fallen, has yet Leave to go and worship God, with *Hope of Acceptance*, as *Abel* did. 2. That if our Persons and Offerings be accepted with God, it must be through Faith in the Redeemer, as *Abel's* were. 3. That Acceptance with the Divine Majesty, is a peculiar and distinguishing Favour: So *Abel* thought; and the same Judgment do all Believers with him form. 4. That those, who obtain this Favour from God, must expect the *Envy* and *Malice* of the World, as *Abel* did. 5. That God will not suffer the Injuries, that

are

are done to his People, to remain unpunished; nor their Sufferings for him to go unrewarded. And, 6. That God would not suffer *Abel's* Faith to die with him; but would raise up others, that shall obtain like precious Faith with him. This, through the infinite Riches of distinguishing Grace, we see, God has done in every Generation since that Time.

My Design, in speaking to the Words of my Text, is more largely to consider what the *present Occasion* calls me to do. As the All-wise God has, within a small Compass of Time, removed a very considerable Number of valuable and useful Men and Ministers, making Breach upon Breach among us; and as it hath pleased his Majesty to lay up our *late Reverend Friend and Pastor* in the Grave; extinguished a *burning and shining Light* in our *British Israel*; called Home an *Embassador* of his, that laboured so long, and with so much Faithfulness and Success in this Church of Christ, I would let you see, that tho' He, with Them, are *dead*, they yet *speak*.

Sure

Sure I am, that there are several most important *Lessons*, which our dead Friend teaches *this Church* in particular. Oh! that God would make them be heard in an *effectual* and *saving* Manner; that he would unstop the deaf Ear, and make the deepest Impressions on our Hearts by the Things, which the departed Servants and Followers of Christ teach!

Before I proceed to shew you the *Lessons*, which dead Saints and Ministers set before us, I would just observe, that in the Language of Scripture, *dead* and *inanimate* Beings are frequently said to have a *Voice*, and are represented as *speaking*. This figurative kind of speaking the inspired Volume elegantly sets forth, to denote those *Instructions*, which the *Providence* of God favours us with by these Means. Thus, for Example, we read, in *Gen IV. 10.* of the *Voice* of *Abel's* Blood, and of its *crying* unto God from the Ground. In like Manner are we told, in *Psal. XIX. 1.* that the Heavens *declare* the Glory of God, and that the Firmament *sheweth* his handy Works; and in Verse 2. that

Day unto Day *uttereth Speech*; and in the 3d Verse, that there is no part of the inhabited World, where the *voice* of these is not *heard*. And you know how often the *Hebrew* Psalmist calls upon the *Heavens* and the *Earth* to *praise* the Lord. In this sense may *dead* Saints and Ministers be said to *speak*. When their Removal into the endless World carries in it some very instructive Lessons, wherein we are greatly concerned; when by Death they proclaim something very remarkable and affecting; when we are called upon by Divine Providence to attend to, and consider what their Departure from us teaches us, then they may be conceived as speaking, tho' dead: Being dead, he yet speaketh. In Considering which words, I would, with Divine Assistance, do these Things.

Shew you,

- I. *How*, or *by what*, dead Saints and Ministers may be truly said to speak.
- II. *What Lessons*, though dead, they may be thought to teach us.
- III. Make some practical Improvement of both those Heads.

I. Let

I. Let us consider, *how*, or *by what*, the Disciples and Ministers of Jesus Christ, even when dead, may yet be said to *speak*. There is, as it were, a *Voice* coming to us from such, that charges us to attend to the Lessons they teach. They call upon us, in that *Metaphorical* manner I mentioned before, to remember several things, with which our eternal Happiness is connected. Thus the great Apostle, in this his Epistle to the believing *Hebrews*, calls upon them to consider what their deceased Pastors *taught* them; *Heb. xiii. 7.* Remember, says he, them which have (or, which have had) the Rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God, whose Faith follow, *considering* the *End* (or, the last *Period*, τὴν ἐκβασιν) of their Conversation: q. d. Call to mind the Lives and Faith of those, whom God once set over you, and who ministred unto you in Holy Things: Think with your selves how humble and holy they were in their Conversation; how patient and submissive they were, whilst walking through the gloomy Vale; how faithful they

were to Christ and his Interest, and persevered in their adherence to their great Lord, even to the Death. These weighty Lectures they now *read* you, tho' *removed* out of your Sight. And indeed those, that are departed in Christ, whether Ministers, or Others, speak to us those several Ways. By

The Holiness of their Lives.

The Graces, for which they were chiefly remarkable.

The signal Services they did for Christ and his Interest.

Their patience under the Trials they endured.

Their perseverance in the Redeemer's Service.

Of these as briefly as I can. And, I. The Disciples and Ministers of Christ, tho' *Dead*, may yet be said to *speak* to us, by the Holiness of their Lives, and their Exemplariness, whilst this side the Grave. It is for this Reason, and with this Intent, the Blessed Spirit has been pleased to *record* and *transmit* so much of the Lives of God's Servants; that having them daily in view, we may, as it were, hear them *speaking* to

to us, and *instructing* us in the necessity and advantages of an holy Life; and so consider them as putting us upon being constant and importunate in our Applications to the Throne of Grace, that we may thence be furnished with strength to copy after them, and transcribe their Lives into ours. A good Man, or faithful Minister, not only *instructs* us by his Example, and the pattern of Holiness he continually sets before us *while Living*, but *when dead*. He does, as it were, *call upon us out of his Grave*, or from the *other World*, to consider how exactly he walked with God in his Generation. He charges us to make his *circumspect and holy Behaviour and Walk*, the Subject of our frequent Meditations. We may warrantably imagine, we hear our deceased Friends and Brethren in Christ, calling to us out of their *dusty Beds*, and telling us that were they capable of paying us a Visit, they would bid us always remember how much it was their *Care and Delight* to please God; how great *Fear* possessed them, lest they might be prevailed with to violate his
righteous

righteous Commands; how diligent they were, to *walk* according to the Rules given them by Christ. Could they speak to us with an *audible Voice*, they would strictly charge us to consider, how much they made it their Study, to walk in an even, uniform, course of Holiness and Obedience; how circumspect they were in their Deportment; how warily they proceeded in their travelling through the World, knowing the numerousness, the strength, the subtlety, and vigilance of their spiritual Enemies. Could they renew their Visits to us, they would tell us, with what *Frequency* and *Sacred Importunacy* they addressed the Divine Majesty; how earnestly they petitioned for Grace out of the great Redeemer's inexhausted Fulness; and by this they were enabled to behave, in some Measure, as became their Name, their Character, and Christian Profession.

II. The Disciples and Ministers of Christ, tho' *dead*, yet *speak* to us, by those Graces of the Spirit of God, for which they were peculiarly remarkable. Were they *noted*, during the Time of

of their Lives, for their *Love to God* and his People, which in many ways discovered its self? Did a very great Degree of *Zeal* possess them, for the Honour, the Kingdom, the Interest of the Son of God? Were they remarkable for their *Hope* in, and *Dependence* on the Promises of God? Was their *Faith* in an unseen Jesus conspicuous to those, that knew them? Did an holy *Joy* in the Ways and Ordinances of the glorified Redeemer discover it self in them? Were they noted for an *holy Contempt of the World*, wherein they lived, when it stood in Competition with the World above? Did they make it evident to others, that they did not only *call* present Enjoyments so many vanities, but really *believed* them to be worthy of no better Name? Were they distinguished for a vigorous *Pursuit* and raised *Esteem* of *eternal Riches*, *celestial Honour*, *Spiritual Pleasure*? Did these give them most *Satisfaction*, as most refined, and every way the most valuable? As those *Graces*, wherein our departed Friends *excelled*, and for which they were remarkable, during their stay with us,

us, called upon us with a loud Voice, to behold and imitate them; so, even by these, do they *speak* to us, when *dead*.

III. Tho' *dead*, the Disciples and Ministers of Christ do yet *speak* to us, by the signal services they did for Jesus and his Interest in the World. As I said before, it was with this View, the Blessed Spirit has set before us so many Instances of good Men, that we may imagine we hear their Voice, and attend to the Instructions they deliver. They charge us continually to remember, how near the *Honour of Jesus*, and the *Interest of Religion*, lay to their Hearts; how this enflamed them with an holy *Resolution*, to spare no Pains, so they might advance Christ and his Glory. They require us to consider, how gladly they *spent themselves* in promoting so good a Work as this; a Work, for which they tell us they were born; a Work, which they made the Scope and Business, the Study and Pleasure of their Lives; a Work, for which they were content to pass through Reproach, and the most contumelious Usage, and for the sake of
which

which they were willing to endure the greatest Difficulties. They proclaim to us, with a loud Voice, the Concern they had for God in a World so degenerate as this. Not that they want or desire our Praises and Commendations for these Things, no, they are above them; but to *stir us up* to an holy Emulation, and put us upon a careful and constant Endeavour to imitate them therein.

4. The Disciples and Ministers of Christ, though *dead*, yet *speak* to us, by their *Patience under Troubles*, and Trials of many kinds. By this they call upon us, to consider their Behaviour. Were they remarkable, in the Time of their Lives, for *Submission to the Will of a wise God*, when overtaken with Afflictions, visited with tormenting Pains, and lingering Sicknes? Did *Resignation*, to the sovereign good Pleasure of God, take place, when the great Disposer of all Things saw fit to weaken and reduce their Strength? Could they speak honourably of his Majesty, when called out to wrestle with what *Nature particularly opposes*? By the Exer-

cise of this their *Patience*, at such Times, and on such Occasions, saying with the Royal Prophet, in *Psal. xxxix. 9. I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because thou, Lord, didst it*; with the patient and holy *Job*, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job. xiii. 15.* and with our meek, but great, Lord and Master, *Mat. xxvi. 39. Not my Will, but thine, be done*; I say, by the Exercise of this their *Patience*, at such Times, they continue, though *dead*, to *speak* unto us. Once more, *5. The Disciples and Ministers of Christ, though dead, yet speak to us, by their Perseverance in Christ's Service to the End of Life.* Notwithstanding the many Thousands of *Temptations* they met with, to relinquish *Christ*; the many *Seducements*, that were laid in their way, to steal their *Hearts* from him; yet they were daily plying the *Throne of Grace* with great *Seriousness*, were constant in their *Applications* and *Views* to the *Redeemer's Fulness*; and from thence, as from an *exhaustless Treasure*, they received renewed *Supplies*. By these they were enabled to *weather* all the

Storms



Storms and Tempests they met with, over a rough Ocean. By these they escaped all the *inveigling Snares* of the most *politio Enemies*. By these they were carried through *good Report* and *evil Report*. And by these they were helped, in *all Conditions of Life*, to approve themselves to the Eye of Christ, so as to finish their Course and Warfare, as became Christians. Through the same Influence they were assisted in the *last and great Conflict*, so that as *Life* was theirs through Christ, so was *Death*; according to what none of the least of the Apostles speaks, in 1 Cor. iii. 22. And thus *persevering*, they *speak* to us, tho' *dead*. Thus I have endeavoured, as briefly as I could, to shew you, how the deceased Disciples and Ministers of the blessed Jesus, may be said to speak. Let us go on to consider,

II. What *Lessons* they teach us. I might name a great many; but I shall insist on no more than those that follow. They teach us, that *Time* will soon expire, and therefore should be carefully *improved*.

This *World* is *false* in all its *Promises*, and therefore ought not to be *trusted*.

The *Soul* is vastly preferable to the *Body*, and therefore should be principally *regarded*.

An *Interest* in the Son of God must, by all Means, be *secured*.

It is a most awful Thing to *die*.

Judgment and *Eternity* are just before, and therefore should be constantly *minded* by us.

1. The deceased Disciples and Ministers of Christ teach us, that *Time* will soon expire, and ought therefore to be carefully *improved* by us. When we behold such conveyed to the silent Mansions of the Dead, some of whom were as *young*, and as likely to have lived, as we our selves; but cut down in the *Bloom of Life*, with all the Vigour and Sprightliness of Youth, or in the Meridian and Strength of their Age; we may imagine, and that on the best Ground, that we hear such departed Friends reading us a most grave and *noble* Lecture on the *Shortness of Time*, and telling us how *uncertain* a Thing

Thing it is. Indeed, I have often
 thought, that the View of a Corps
 at the Place of Interment, is most pro-
 per to convey the most seasonable In-
 struction. Do we see several laid up
 in the Grave, that wide Dominion of
 the King of Terrors, who seemed to
 have been built for *many Years*? Oh!
 how loudly and solemnly do they *speak*
 to us, to consider how soon *we shall be,*
as they are! Are *we* in Health? So
 were *they*. Were *they* liable, notwith-
 standing, to the Arrests of Sickness and
 Death? So are *we*. Have *we* any more
 Security than *they* had? And are *they*
 gone down to the Chambers of Silence,
 and the Apartments of the pale Mo-
 narch? How know *we*, how soon *we*
 may be commanded to pay the same
 Visit? Is *our Health* uninterrupted? Are
our Constitutions robust and unbroken?
 So perhaps were *theirs* a Week, a Day,
 before they received their great Sum-
 mons, and found themselves within the
 cold Embraces of Death. Our depart-
 ed Friends may, therefore, be conceived
 to *call* upon us from the Grave, to go
 and deliberately to think of the Preca-
 rious-

riousness of Health, the Brevity of our Life, the Uncertainty of Death. If a *dying* Friend, or Minister tell us with Concern, how short and fitting a Thing Time is, (as I well remember how earnestly my deceased Brother did, when I visited him, a few Days before he died, and hope I shall never forget what he then said to me: I say, if a Friend, or Minister, when *dying*, reminds us of the *Shortness of Time*,) how much more does he so, when we see no more than his Remains before us, having exchanged Time for *Eternity*! This is a wise and most useful Lecture they read us, grounded on the Account the inspired Books give us, and on daily Observations. There the whole of our Time is described by a *Day* which soon closes. There we are told, that Time rides on with the *Swiftiness of a Post*, that soon comes to the End of his Stage. And Oh! how numerous are the *Accidents*, to which we are exposed! How many the *Contingencies*, from which we cannot guard! How easily is the *Union* dissolved, that now obtains between the dear Companions, the Soul and Body!

How

How small a Thing, when commissioned by the great, the wise, Disposer of Life and Death, puts a Stop to all the Springs of Life, and renders us the melancholy Monuments of Mortality! A Puff of Air, let in at a Crevice, shall as certainly dismiss us, as a Bullet discharged from the Mouth of a Cannon. There is not one of those Thousands of Windows, that belong to the Body, I mean the Pores, but may prove a Channel, to introduce Diseases and Death, as those well know, who know any thing of the Make of that admirable Structure, the Body. Every Breath we draw, may be the Messenger of that Sovereign that presides over the gloomy Regions. The least Fly may send us to our Grave, as certainly as the most threatening Dissemper. Suitable to this, are the Words of that most excellent and holy Divine, Dr. Rivet, a few Days before he bowed the Head, and gave up the Ghost; "Who, says he, "is Man, that thou should'st so magnify him? He is like to Vanity, Flesh, "and a Wind, that passeth away. With "how small a Thing are the strongest
" amongst

" amongst Men cast down ! By a vile
 " Excrement (referring to his own Case,
 which proved fatal) " by a little Ob-
 " struction, which no Remedies can open.
 Methinks, then, every Friend, I con-
 vey to their long Home, repeats to me, in
 a solemn Manner, the Advice, which
 the wisest of Princes gives, in Eccles.
 iii. 10. *Whatever thy Hand findeth to
 do, do it with all thy Might; for there
 is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge
 in the Grave, whither thou goest.* Me-
 thinks I hear them repeating the Words
 of my great Lord, in Job. ix. 4. *Be care-
 ful to work the Works of him, that
 sent thee, while it is Day. The Night
 cometh (and will soon overtake thee)
 wherein thou canst not work.* Do not be
 prodigal of that *Health*, which so soon
 may be destroyed; nor lavish of that
Time, of which thou canst not be sure,
 that thou shalt enjoy an *Hour*. Dili-
 gently improve it for God and your
 Soul; seeing the next Hour you may be
 where we are. Through the Aids of
 Divine Grace, we were careful to im-
 prove the *Time of Life*, and now reap
 the Advantage in never-fading *Glory*.
 Go,

Go, and do thou likewise. Time, as it is uncertain, so it is highly to be valued, and carefully to be improved. Memorable are the Words of that great and learned Man *Salmasius*, when Dying, "Ob! says he, I have lost a deal of Time. Time! that most precious Thing in the World, of which had I but one Tear longer, it should be spent in reading David's Psalms, and Paul's Epistles. Nor less remarkable are the Words of dying *Grotius*, that great Critic, "That he would give all his Learning and Honour, for the plain Integrity and Piety of JOHN URICK, who was a devout poor Man, that spent EIGHT HOURS of his Time in PRAYER, EIGHT in LABOUR, and the other EIGHT be allowed for his Sleep, and other Refreshments."

2. Another Lesson, which our deceased Friends teach us, is, that the World is false in all its Promises, and therefore not to be trusted. How evident is this in one laid up in the Grave! What advantage is the World of to him? He carries none of all its Va-

nities with him into the cold Mansion,
 wherein he is laid up. It *promises*
 much: But it bids the deluded Man
 Farewel, whom it perswaded to believe
 it was in Friendship with. His *Eyes*
 behold its *Finery* no more. His *Ears*
 are stopped, and are no longer charmed
 with its delightful *Sounds*. None of
 its *Riches* can be of any further Service
 in those silent Regions. All its *Plea-*
sures are for ever useless. Its *Honours*
 are all gone. The Dust of the *Beg-*
gar lies mingled with that of the *Monarch*,
 and are alike contemptible in the Eyes of
Men, tho' the Dust of the Saint is sacred
 and dear to *God*. What Advantage
 hath *Alexander* above the meanest of
 his *Subjeſts* in the Grave? Or *Cræſus*
 above the most despicable *Beggar*? The
 one can use the Vanities of the World,
 no more than the other. *Herod* can
 wear his embroidered *Apparel* no long-
 er; nor *Cæſar* entertain himself with
 his sinful *Dalliances* more. Their Fa-
 vourite World hath bid them adieu for
 ever, and left them to endure the Mi-
 ſery they deſerve, for their criminal Stu-
 pidity. Methinks, then, when ever I
 convey

convey a Friend to the Grave, I hear him speaking to me, in some such Language as this, " See here, how little the
 " World I have left is to be valued.
 " What are all the Things it contains
 " to me in this cold Habitation? How
 " insignificant are its Entertainments!
 " Have no Dependence on its Promises.
 " Trust none of its Smiles. Be careful to secure a better Portion than
 " that can give you, before you are
 " made to take up your Dwelling with
 " us. If this Advice be neglected; if
 " you are the Favourites of the World
 " we have left behind us, you are undone for ever. Methinks a departed Friend joins in with the Scripture-Account of this Matter, and is heard to say, " You see that the Fashion of the
 " World passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 31.
 " Its Beauty, its Allurements, its Vanities, its Pleasures, whither are they
 " gone? We are now dead to them,
 " and they to us. By Divine Grace
 " we were enabled to despise its best
 " Offers, not to depend on its fairest Promises, and now reap the Benefit.
 " Go and do thou likewise. This I well

remember, was one of the Lessons my dead Brother taught me, when dying, *Oh! says he, pray that I may see more of the Vanity of this World!* How much more does he teach us this, now he is dead!

3. Another Lesson which our deceased Friends teach us, is, that the *Soul* is vastly preferable to the *Body*, and therefore should be principally *regarded*. This is a most profitable Lecture, read to us by every one, whom we convey to the House, appointed for all Living. No sooner is the Earth turned up, but we see *Ruins* and *Desolation* scattered round the Ground. *Bones* and *Skulls* present themselves to our View, the sad *Trophies* of the King of those shady Realms. Where is now the *fine Complexion*? What is become of that *'curious Symmetry and Proportion of Parts*, which we once beheld? Whither is that *Beauty* gone, wherewith poor Mortals are now so much delighted? They are all lost in Death. Oh! How awful and humbling a Sight is a dead Friend, preparing for *Putrefaction*! What *Beauty* do you see in a *Death's Head*? Or what in a *Skeleton*? What Difference do

do you discern between the most *Fair*,
and the most *Deformed*, after a short
Continuance in Death's Territories? No-
thing is there seen, but *Ghastliness* and
Deformity; every thing, that shews
with how much Propriety the Apostle
calls the Body a *vile Body*. And even
before it is brought to the Repository
of the Dead, how *awful* is the Sight
of those, whose Countenances God has
changed, and whom he hath sent away!
This, then, is a most instructive Lesson,
which our departed Friends teach us.
Every such Person, methinks, should
be heard speaking to us with a loud
Voice some such Things as these, *And*
“ *why so much Care and Bustle about*
“ *the perishing Body! Why so much An-*
“ *xiety about Food and Raiment? Why*
“ *so much a-do about that, which, with*
“ *us, must soon become Food for Worms?*
“ *See here the mournful Instances of the*
“ *Power of Death. Take a View of those*
“ *Remains, about to be turned into Pu-*
“ *trefaction and Rotteness. Oh! Let not*
“ *that vile Body be thought more worthy*
“ *of your Regard, than your immortal*
“ *Part. Take the wise Advice of Christ,*
“ *in*

“ in John vi. 27. Labour not for the
 “ Meat which perisheth, but for that
 “ which endureth unto everlasting Life.
 “ See that your Souls be principally
 “ provided for; that the Kingdom of
 “ God, and his Righteousness, be sought
 “ in the first Place. Your Souls Survive,
 “ when the Body, with ours, is laid
 “ in the Dust. Death cannot injure
 “ the one, tho’ it levels the other with
 “ the Ground. And shall the Body com-
 “ mand your first Thoughts, engross the
 “ best of your Time and Strength, while
 “ the Soul starves? See what is now
 “ before you; and by us learn, that be-
 “ tween these two there is no Proportion.

4. Another Lesson we are taught
 by our deceased Friends, is, that an
Interest in Jesus Christ must, by all
 Means, be secured. How awful a Le-
 cture does the Grave read us of the
Fall, and of *Sin* that has opened its
 Mouth! It reminds us of the Concern
 we have in the *Primitive Apostacy*, for
 by Sin Death entered into the World,
Rom. v. 12. It is this, that provoked
 a most righteous and holy God to pro-
 nounce that solemn, but just, Sentence,
 Gen.

Gen. iii. 19. "*Dust thou art, and unto Dust thou must return.*" Nor does Death remind us only of that, which the *Body* undergoes; but it teaches us the *Ruin* of the *Soul*, which in the Language of the New Testament is stiled *The Second Death*, consisting in an everlasting Separation from God and Blessedness, from which nothing can skreen us, but an Interest in the blessed Redeemer. Whoever has this is exempted from the worst kind of Death I mentioned before, *John xi. 26.* And can we behold a Friend of ours conveyed to the Grave, and not hear him charging us to think of Christ? I hope I shall never forget the Request, which my deceased Brother made, some few Days before he expired: *Ob! says he, pray, that I may see more of the Worth of Christ, and an Interest in him.* How much more movingly does he speak this, now he is gone! Methinks, I hear him calling upon each of us in particular, to see in the first Place, that an Interest in him, and in his Righteousness, be made sure. Dreadful it must be, to lie down in the Grave without this, seeing where this is not, there can be no Admittance into Heaven.

" *He*

“ *He, that hath the Son, hath Life; but*
 “ *he, that hath not the Son, hath not*
 “ *Life,* 1 John v. 12. Could a dead
 Man speak to us with an audible Voice,
 how movingly would he instruct, and shew
 us the absolute *Necessity*, the everlasting
Importance, the infinite *Value and Advan-*
tage of *Christ* and his *Righteousness*!
 How earnestly would he press us to go to
 him for it, and never to compose our selves
 to sleep without it! This, this, would
 he say, is the *one Thing needful*; with-
 out which, stepping down into the Grave;
 wherein we lie, must be attended with
 endless Misery. It is this Interest in the
 Son of God, that distinguishes between the
dead Sinner, and the *dead Saint*. It is
 this, that renders the *Dust* of the one *vile*,
 and that of the other *pretious*. It is this,
 that maketh the Difference between the
 Souls of those two. This is the Cause of
 the *Happiness* of a *Believer*, tho’ dead;
 and to the Want of this is the *Misery* of
 the *Sinner* owing. Every departed Friend,
 whom we accompany to the Grave, teach-
 es us this Lesson, and sends us away with
 this solemn Charge, “ *See that Christ be*
 “ *yours, and you his.*

5. Another Thing, which the Disciples and Ministers of Christ, though dead, yet speak to us, is, that is an *awful Thing to die*. Death, though but a small Word, is full of Solemnity. To a *Christless Sinner*, it speaks nothing but what is *tremendous*. And even to a *good Man*, it carries in it nothing, for which in its self it should be desired. Those Things, that are the *Forerunners* of Death, and that tell us he is just at hand, are *mournful*. How melancholy is the darkned Room! How moving, the Sight of weeping Friends! And frequently a long Train of lingring Distempers, and acute Pains! And who can describe or know the *Solemnity* of that *Revolution*, the Soul passes under, when the *Union* is actually *dissolved*, and when the Spirit becomes an Inhabitant of the unseen State! To change one World for another! To enter on a State endless and unchangeable! Oh, how *solemn* are these Things! How loud a Voice does not a breathless Corps send forth! How great a Lesson does it not teach us! Methinks, I hear it calling upon me,

to think of the *last Moments of my Life*, wherein I must be turned out of my Tenement of Clay, part with all my Friends and Possessions here below, bid adieu to all temporal Concerns, and go as an Inhabitant into the World of invisible Spirits! How great should the *Preparation* be for a *Change* so great! Especially when you add,

6. Lastly, That our deceased Friends read us a noble Lecture of the Judgment and eternal World, that are just before us, and which ought to be chiefly regarded by us. Were there no more to be done, but part with the Body, and all the Concerns of this present Life, yet this would be a most solemn Affair. But when after *Death* comes *Judgment*, upon which follows either *eternal Happiness or Misery*, this must greatly add to the *Solemnity*. So the inspired Penman tells us, *Heb. ix. 27.* and so our Lord assures us in more Places than one. This is one of the great Lessons our departed Friends teach us. And let those, who have ever seriously sat down, and attentively thought of *Eternity*, be Judges of its *Importance*.

Are

Are they, whom we conduct to the Grave, gone to their *appointed Stations* in the other World? So must we. Are they *fixed* therein by the *irreversible* Sentence of the supreme Judge? So must we be, when once the Prisoners of the cold Mansion.

Thus I have shewn you, how our departed Friends speak to us, *viz.* by the Holiness of their Lives; the Graces for which they were remarkable; the signal Services they did for Christ and his Interest in the World; their Patience under the Troubles they endured; and their persevering in the Service of the Redeemer to the End of Life. I have also shewn you some of the Lessons, which, though dead, they yet teach us; such as these, that Time will soon expire, and therefore ought to be carefully improved; that this World is false in its Promises, and therefore should not be trusted; that the Soul is preferable to the Body, and ought therefore to be principally regarded; that an Interest in the Son of God must, by all Means, be secured; that it is a most awful Thing to die; and that

Judgment and the eternal World are just at hand, and should therefore be chiefly minded by us.

Those Things, on which I have insisted, are common to all Christians. There are, indeed, some Things, *peculiar to Ministers*, which the dead Servants of Christ speak. I hope I am not insensible of what my dear deceased Brother speaks to *me* in particular. Methinks, I hear him calling upon me to study harder, to double my Diligence in the Work which God has assigned me, to labour more for Christ and Souls, to spend my self in the Employment wherein I am fixed, to do all I am able for the Redeemer and his Interest, to work while it is Day, and be faithful to Christ to the End of my Life. These Things, I hope, I shall do, by the renewed Assistance of Divine Grace, till God shall call me to him.

There has scarce been any thing delivered, but of a particular Nature, and therefore there's the less Need of a prolix *Application*. But desirous of improving the present Opportunity, I would offer a few Things by way of Improvement, And,

I. How

1. How guilty are they, who regard not the Instructions, which the Disciples and Ministers of Christ give them, either *living*, or *dead*! A most melancholy Thing it is, to think how many in the World act, as if God had pronounced them immortal; and as if, when they are to be removed hence, they ceased to exist. They live, as if they were not to die; or as if they imagined, that God was obliged, when they are dead, to make them happy in the other World. How little Regard do they express to the Commands of God, or the Rules of Christ! How little is it their Care, to be serviceable to the Redeemer's Interest! How small a Part of their Study do they make it, to secure an Interest in his Merits, and most perfect Righteousness! How backward are they to go to him for Life and Salvation! How seldom do they allow themselves to think of their Departure hence, or of that World, into which Death transmits them! Though they may perceive their Mortality, in the Removal of others, and by the frequent

quent Disorders of their own Bodies; though they are most earnestly pressed to consider these solemn Things, by Ministers and others, *while living*, and hear them, as it were, *speaking out of their Graves*; calling on them to remember how soon Time will be at an End, and Eternity take place; charging them to consider, how false and dissatisfying the World they live in is; how much more excellent the Soul is than the Body, and how much more worthy of their Thoughts and Regard; though they are required, by no means to neglect an Interest in the Friendship of Jesus; yet how deaf are they to these Things! Oh, that their Eyes were opened, their Ears unstopped, and their Hearts duly affected therewith! May that sovereign Grace, that has done great Things in every Generation, prevent their being for ever miserable, by prevailing with them effectually to lay these Things to Heart! How many sad Thoughts must it not administer to a good Man, to see such numbers of Men around him, going into the
other

other World, as fast as the Wings of Time can hurry them on, and yet taking no Care of their Souls, making no Provision for the future endless World, neglecting an Interest in that Jesus, who alone can bestow eternal Life on whom he will, and without whom it cannot be obtained!

2. Do the Disciples and Ministers of Christ, though dead, yet speak? Let us, then, diligently attend to what they say. Do they command us to begin with God; and, giving our selves to him, chuse him for our God? May the blessed Spirit enable us to do so speedily. Do they charge us to behave in this transitory World, as those that are going to another? May this be done with Care and Diligence. Do they strictly require us, to do all we can for Christ and his Honour in the World? How reasonable is it, we should put this in Execution, seeing we are under so many and great Engagements to him; and seeing, as I said before, it is he, that holds the Keys of Death, and the invisible World in his own Hand, and >

and therefore none but he can let us into the World of Delight! Do they call upon us to be provident of our Time, and lay it out to the best Purposes? How just is the Command, when an unseen and endless State lies before us! Oh, that each of us may be wise indeed, in hearing and attending to these Instructions; that it may be our Care, to husband the hastening Moments of Time, which will soon expire; to walk with God in our Generation; to improve our Health and Talents for Christ our Lord and Judge: That we may labour to behave as pilgrims, who must soon be carried to our long Home; that we may make it our Study, to get and keep our Evidences bright; to lay up a comfortable Stock of Christian Experience, which we may entertain our selves with in a dying Hour, and will prove better to us than all the Cordials we may then receive. These, these are the *Businesses of Life*, without which Life does not deserve that Name. These are the great Things, our departed Ministers and Friends urge us to regard.

regard. The Man, that neglects these, is *dead* while he *lives*; dead, in a moral Sense; and must expect nothing but *eternal Death*, when ever arrested by the pale Messenger, unless quickened and renewed by Divine Grace. Our *Pastor* is here no more: but, being dead, he yet speaks; requires us not to forget what he taught us in the Time of his Life. He does, as it were, call to us out of his Grave, to consider and regard the Truths now delivered; and above all to secure an Interest in that blessed Jesus, who can be with us in every Step of our Way through the World, wherein we live; who can furnish us with fresh Supplies of Grace and Strength, whereby we shall be kept from being overcome; who can be with us, when walking through the dark Vale, and afford us Comfort suited to that Extremity; who alone can acquit us, and conduct us into Mansions of Rest and Blessedness. This great and only Friend, this most valuable Advocate and Redeemer, we are charged by those, that are gone before us, never to neglect; but to make sure, to value, to

G walk

walk humbly with, to honour, to love
above all others: And when
Death shall have done its worst,
shall converse with those your deceased
Friends, and, with them, be with Jesus
for ever. To him be Glory and Do-
minion for ever, Amen.



as it were call out of his Grave,
to consider and regard the Truths now
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